KITABUN NIKAH

By:
Hadrat Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim Palanpuri Sahib

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بسم اللهالرحمن الرحيم
نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

PREFACE

All praises are due to Allâh through whose grace and mercy and through the efforts of the Tablîghî Jamâ'at, there is an inclination towards Islam especially among the youth.

My acquaintances have informed me that the youth have a deep sense of love for the sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and they want to spend their youth according to the pure and noble way of Allâh's messenger.

The most important aspect for teenagers is the preservation of their youth and the factors related to marriage and living together with a partner. They desire to read religious books on this topic. However, there is a complete lack of good literature on this subject. As a result, when they are faced with the prospects of marriage and all related matters, they have to study the books of non-Muslims which are filled with obscene and vile facts that taint one's character.

My friends insisted that I compile a booklet that conforms to Islamic norms on this subject for the youth so that there remains no need to study the books of non-Muslims and that one's life could be led according to the pattern of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

This was an excellent and most appropriate request of my friends and it was my responsibility to honour their desire. Initially, I hesitated. Preparing the material for this book was a very important task especially when most books do not contain such facts.

However, I realized the urgency of the need to produce such a unique book. Perhaps, by preparing a booklet of this kind, one could achieve the glad tidings of Rasûlullâh ﷺ for reviving his sunnahs and this could become a means for achieving eternal salvation.

I placed my trust in Allâh and He assisted me. After much effort, I was able to prepare this booklet. May Allâh overlook my shortcomings and accept this booklet. May He make it beneficial for all the people. *Âmîn*.

(Moulânâ) Muhammad Ibrâhîm Pâlanpûrî Sâheb
A servant of Hadîth at Madrasah Arabiyyah, Ta'lîmul Islam, Ânand, Gujrat, India.

Translator's Note: Some narrations mentioned in the Urdu original are not authentic and have been omitted from the English translation.

THE BEGINNING OF YOUTH

In Sharî'ah, there are different signs that indicate the maturity of a person.
A boy attains puberty (is said to be bâligh - mature) if he experiences any of the following:
a) He has a wet dream.
b) He is able to make a woman pregnant.
c) He ejaculates with desire.
However, if the above signs are not evident, and a boy reaches the age of 15 years, he will be regarded as having reached the age of puberty (bâligh).

A girl is said to be *bâligh* (matured) if she experiences any of the following:
a) a monthly period (haid-menstruation).
b) She has a wet dream (and seminal fluid is discharged).
c) She becomes pregnant.
d) The release of semen with desire while she is awake.
If she does not experience any of these signs, she will be considered mature when she reaches the age of fifteen.

Only lunar months and years are taken into consideration in Islamic matters. On reaching the age of puberty, all the principles of Islam such as Salâh, fasting, etc. become Fard (obligatory). If one disobeys or neglects any of these, then one has to make qadâ - fulfil them as the opportunity avails itself.

Before maturity, the child was subservient to the parents. There

were no Shar'î obligations on him. However, now after reaching the age of maturity, he is counted as a man and all the Islamic obligations are focused on him.

THE DESIRES OF ADOLESCENCE

In Arabic there is a very wise saying:

الشباب شعبة من الجنون

"Adolescence is a branch of insanity."

In reality, as soon as a person becomes mature, all kinds of emotions and desires erupt within him. This is a very dangerous stage of a growing child: he gets attracted to passion, and the environment and society in which he is growing begins to lead him in different directions. These factors lead to sexual anarchy and obscenity that endanger the social fabric of society.

THE CORRECT PRESERVATION OF YOUTH

Parents should keep a close watch on their teenagers and endeavour firmly to keep them away from all kinds of evil company. They should be kept away from the cinema, theatre, music, dancing, novels, pornography, sexually explicit articles in the print media or the Internet and anything that is detrimental to their character. Boys should not attend the gatherings of females nor mix freely with young girls.

The youth should abstain from all these evils themselves. The effort is not only of the parents. The teenagers have to muster up courage as well. If one treaded the wrong path from one's youth, then it is more difficult than moving a mountain to

change the direction later. Together with destroying one's honour, there is a great danger in destroying one's health and physical strength. This is the one stage in life, which if spoiled, can destroy one's entire future.

Man has two natural instincts created in him: carnal desires and love. As soon as the age of youth begins, these two forces are accelerated. Those factors which have been mentioned above and from which one has to abstain, increase one's desires and love. At this stage in life, one's intelligence is also deficient. Therefore, one will very soon try to fulfill one's desires in all the wrong avenues and thus become involved in adultery. And if one does not find a wrong avenue to fulfill one's desires or one does not have the courage to strike up a friendship, one will become involved in unlawful acts to curb one's desires e.g. masturbation and homosexuality with young boys. These filthy acts are not only extremely sinful, they also destroy one's health. In fact, one loses one's potency and thus one's ability to marry in future is also threatened. Like a drying flower, one's life slowly deteriorates. These wrong and promiscuous habits can lead to fatal diseases like gonorrhea, syphilis and AIDS.

It is therefore highly essential that one studies good literature and adopts the company of pious saints from the age of fifteen. If a teenager looks after himself during this trying period, the rest of his life will progress smoothly and efficiently. But if he adopted the wrong company and learnt wrong habits, then there is every likelihood that he will become caught up in the quagmire of life and death and life will become burdensome and distasteful for him.

THE METHOD OF PRESERVING ONE'S YOUTH

When children reach the age of understanding (generally between seven and eight years), inculcate the habit in them to sleep on separate beds even if they are brothers and sisters. It is Islamically unlawful to allow them to sleep together. It can, at any time, lead to the spoiling of their character. More caution must be exercised with *ghair mahrams* (those whom one can marry).

It is also not advisable to allow very young children to sleep completely alone in their rooms. This can lead to the spreading of all kinds of thoughts in their minds which can lead to many dangers.

It is highly essential to clean the body especially the private parts during one's early youth otherwise dirt will accumulate on the organs causing one to scratch and other skin diseases. Scratching will create a carnal urge which will lead to disastrous consequences. It is also necessary to remove all pubic hair.

The most preferable method is to clean oneself once a week, especially on Fridays. One should take a bath and shave off all pubic hair and the hair under the arms. Moustaches should be trimmed. If this is not possible weekly, then at least every fifteen to twenty days. The maximum period is forty days. One will be sinful if one did not remove the hair within forty days.

Young children should be kept busy in some activity. Being unoccupied is extremely harmful and it can lead to one becoming a vagabond and wanderer. It is also highly essential to keep away from evil company and evil friends. When evil

company harms even good people, what effect will it have on immature children?

SAFETY MEASURES

As the object of Islamic law is to keep the social environment as pure as possible from all kinds of sexual excitement and stimulation, it has allowed satisfaction of the sexual urge only in marriage and all relations outside marriage are unlawful. In order to strengthen the society, Islam has provided some effective safeguards.

SELF-PURIFICATION

This is in fact the basis of the Islamic way of life - Muslims are educated and trained so that they automatically obey the spirit of Islamic law. Those who believe in Allâh, the Qur'ân and Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the day of Judgment, follow the laws of Sharî'ah merely for the pleasure and fear of Allâh. When a believer knows that Allâh dislikes obscenity and indecency, he will, if he is a practicing Muslim, abstain from indulging in all such acts and will keep his life absolutely pure and chaste. Islam provides moral education to its followers to help them attain the required standard of purity and chastity.

"HAYÂ" (BASHFULNESS AND SHYNESS)

This is the force, which builds up modesty and prevents a believer from falling prey to all urges of obscenity and indecency. It protects him from all evils prohibited by Islam, including adultery. The moral teachings of Islam are intended to awaken this dormant, but very powerful feeling of shyness in

human nature and thus shows man how to develop it and strengthen it so as to make it part of one's mental attitude. Rasûlullâh ﷺ is reported to have said:

إن لكل دين خلقا وخلق الاسلام الحياء

رواه مالك عن زيد بن طلحة (التمهيد ج ٨ ص ٣/٤٧٢)

"Every religion has morality and the morality of Islam is hayâ." The quality of hayâ is strengthened by moral education so that it can detect even the slightest inclination of the mind towards evil and sin.

UNSEEN DESIRES

In the eyes of Islamic law, not only physical union between the two sexes is considered adultery, but every such inclination and desire towards the opposite sex outside marriage is equivalent to adultery. Thus, every lustful desire when seeing women, talking to them and visiting them is adultery for these are preliminary steps towards it and if men are given the opportunity, the actual act of adultery is likely to occur. The law cannot have any jurisdiction over desire, for it is hidden in people's hearts, but it can be detected by their conscience. Rasûlullâh ﷺ explained this in these words: "The eyes commit adultery and their adultery is evil looks. The adultery of the ears is to listen. The hands commit adultery and their adultery is touching harâm, the feet commit adultery and their adultery is moving towards sin, the adultery of the tongue is lustful talk, the adultery of the heart is evil desire and, in the end the sexual organs confirm all this (by their action)."

There are two benefits of sexual passion: satisfaction of intercourse and preservation of mankind. But there is a danger

that if it is not kept under control and exceeds the limits, a man loses his sense of right and wrong and enjoys any woman. This destroys his religious and social life. Such a man often takes recourse to medicine to increase his sexual passion. This is all the more dangerous. Such a man lives only to satisfy his sexual passion. The medicine for this is to control his eyes and thoughts.

SEXUAL LOOKS

The sexual and evil gaze is the worst of all evils in this respect because it lights the fire for the actual sexual explosion. Therefore, the Qur'ân and the Sunnah have pointed strongly to this evil and restrained it.

The Qur'ân says:

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ ذٰلِكَ أَزْكٰى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ خَبِيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ

"Tell the believing men to restrain their gazes (from looking at other women) and protect their private parts. This is a pure way for them, surely Allâh knows well what they do."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Your first (unintentional) look is pardonable, but beware of casting a second look."

DESIRE TO DISPLAY

Another grave evil, which is very common amongst women, is the desire to display beauty and adornments in order to attract males. The Qur'ân calls it *tabarruja al-jâhilîyyah* (display of

ignorance). All display of beauty and decorations to please people other than the husband is called display of ignorance. The Qur'ân says:

وَلاَ تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الأُوْلَى

"And do not go about displaying your adornments as women used to do in the days of ignorance."

A woman's voice is also provocative and it can create passion in the heart of a person. An innocent talk between young persons can serve as a prelude to an evil action. The Qur'ân warns against this evil in these words: "If you fear Allâh, do not talk in a soft voice, lest men of unhealthy heart should cherish false hopes from you; if you have to speak (to other men), speak in an unaffected way."

USE OF PERFUME

Perfume is another factor, which may act as a messenger between two persons. Islam does not permit a woman to apply perfume and go out of the house, for it entices men and leads to sexual stimulation.

NUDITY

Islam has taught and developed such a fine sense of modesty among its followers that has no parallel in human history. For Muslim women and men, covering their *satar* (private parts) is more important than mere decoration. In Islam, nudity is considered indecent, obscene and can never be tolerated. Not only this, but Islam does not even approve of the husband and wife exposing their private parts openly before each other.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When one of you goes to his wife, he should cover his private parts. They should not become completely naked." Âishah ؓ never saw Rasûlullâh ﷺ naked. The fact is that Islamic modesty does not approve of one stripping naked even when alone in a room, for Allâh ﷻ has a greater right that one should observe *hayâ* before him. Islam also disapproves of such dress, which reveals the body and the private parts.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The purpose of these preventative measures is to create a social environment, which is totally unfavorable for the growth of evil desires and emotional disturbances. These measures are intended to weaken those factors that lead to sexual anarchy and eradicate all forms of obscenity that endanger the social system. The following measures are enjoined for this purpose:

1. Islam has forbidden all forms of indecency and nudity and enjoined decent dress for all members of society.

2. Islam has also clearly specified the parts of the body, which must be covered by all members of the Islamic society.
3. Rules of entrance. Islam has enjoined all its males to refrain from entering the house or rooms without alerting the female occupants.

a. When your children attain puberty, they should seek permission before entering the parent's room. This permission becomes necessary when children feel and come to know about sexual matters.

b. A person is forbidden from entering houses other than his own until he is granted permission, and when he enters the house, he should greet the people therein with salutations. Thus, people are taught to respect other people's privacy and to enter their houses only after receiving their permission.

c. When you ask a woman for something, ask for it from behind a curtain. This is a purer way for your hearts.

Acting against sexual inclination and excitement by keeping the two sexes apart, explains the whole philosophy of this regulation.

4. Men are not allowed to stay with women other than their own wives in privacy, nor are they permitted to touch any part of their bodies, no matter how close the relationship is.

5. Shun music. Undoubtedly music and especially the music of the modern age has a strong tendency to excite the sexual passions and these in turn find immoral outlets. Islam forbids all types of music.

6. Stay away from the cinema.

It is an admitted fact that most of the moral and social evils stem from the following:

a. Free intermingling of sexes
b. Immodest and scanty dressing
c. Co-education
d. Music, dancing and television
e. Alcoholism and narcotics
f. Illicit literature and pornography
g. Courting before marriage

h. Pre-marital sex

ZINÂ - A SLIPPERY PATH TO HELL

Chastity is a great virtue in a man or a woman - a chaste woman is a great asset to a husband and a chaste husband to a woman. Unchastity in any form has been made unlawful by the Qur'ân. Of all the passions of the eye, ear, tongue, belly and genital organs, sexual passion is the greatest. Perhaps no sin is more rampant today than *zinâ* (fornication and adultery).

Rasûlullâh ﷺ took an oath in Allâh's name that there was nothing, which Allâh so condemned as His male and female servant committing adultery.

Fornication is morally the most heinous crime that a person can commit. The one who commits it in fact proves that his humanity has been overwhelmed by his animality and he is not fit to live as a virtuous member of the human society. The Qur'ân condemns this abominable act which ruins families, destroys household peace and strikes at the root of pure and pious living, and prescribes exemplary punishment for it:

وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً

"And come not near to adultery. It is an evil way."

اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِيْ فَاجْلِدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلاَ تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِيْ دِيْنِ اللهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الأخِرِ

"The adulteress and the adulterer, lash each one of them a hundred times. And let not pity withhold you from obedience at

all if you believe in Allâh and the Last Day."
Islam has restricted sexual relationship to matrimony. It has advocated marriage and discouraged a life of celibacy. The normal and natural way of life for a Muslim is to get married and raise a family. This is the only course open for a Muslim, to satisfy his natural instincts of sex through conjugal relations.

PHILOSOPHY AND WISDOM OF MARRIAGE

Islam considers marriage a social obligation. It is an act, which is greatly admired by Allâh and recommended by his Messengers ﷺ. It is the natural relationship between man and woman, as the Qur'ân has explicitly stated in these words:

سبحان الذى خلق الازواج كلها مما تنبت الارض ومن أنفسهم ومما لا يعلمون

"Glory to Allâh who created in pairs all things that the earth produces as well as their own human kind."

The first objective of the Islamic law of marriage is that it protects the morals of the people. Islam forbids adultery and fornication. It compels both man and woman to discipline their natural desires in a way that protects them from indecency. They build a fortress in the form of marriage to protect their morals.

The second objective of marriage is that relationship between the sexes should be based on a mutual co-operation of love, mercy and kindness for each other, so that they may also enjoy that comfort, pleasure, peace and happiness, the attainment of which is vital for a clean and happy society.
A deep study of the Qur'ânic verses relating to marital relations

shows that the purpose and idea of matrimony is love, mercy and kindness. The Qur'ân mentions this in these words:

ومن آياته أن خلق لكم من أنفسكم أزواجا لتسكنوا اليها وجعل بينكم مودة ورحمة إن فى ذلك لآيات لقوم يتفكرون

"Among His signs, one is that He created mates for you from among yourselves so that you may find solace in them and He has put love and mercy in your hearts."

THE CORRECT TIME FOR MARRIAGE

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said:

من ولد له ولد فليحسن اسمه وأدبه فإذا بلغ فليزوجه فإن بلغ ولم يزوجه فأصاب إثما فإنما إثمه على أبيه

(روى عن أبي سعيد وابن عباس كما فى المشكوة ج ٢ ص ٢٧١)

"When one attains maturity, let him be married. If he attains maturity, and his father does not get him married and then he commits a sin, his sin will fall upon his father."

When a parent feels that his children are of marriageable age and can bear the responsibilities of a family, the parent should get them married. The age may vary in different individuals. But the average age for a boy will be approximately 20 years and the girl approximately 17 years.

MARRIAGE IS ENCOURAGED

In view of the great importance and excellence of marriage, young boys and girls are encouraged to get married as soon as they attain the age of puberty. The Qur'ân mentions this in these words:

وأنكحوا الايامى منكم والصالحين من عبادكم وإمائكم ان يكونوا فقراء يغنهم الله من فضله والله واسع عليم وليستعفف الذين لا يجدون نكاحا حتى يغنيهم الله من فضله

"Arrange marriages between the single man and woman among you...who are virtuous. If they are poor, Allâh will provide a means for them out of His bounty and those that cannot find a mate, should keep themselves chaste, till Allâh provides for them with means out of His grace."

The object of this is that Muslims should ensure that no one in society remains unmarried - and the people of the house, friends and neighbours should all take necessary interest in the matter. This instruction is firstly for the parents of both the girl and the boy. The former should not reject a pious and virtuous suitor merely because he happens to be poor. Similarly, the boy's parents should not go on postponing his marriage because he is not yet earning enough. Even if one's income is not yet sufficient, one should marry with firm faith in Allâh - very often the marriage itself becomes the cause of improving strained financial circumstances.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ, in the following Ahâdîth, also encouraged young men to get married:

١) عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا معشر الشباب من استطاع منكم الباءة فليتزوج فإنه أغض للبصر وأحصن للفرج ومن لم يستطع فعليه بالصوم فإنه له وجاء

(متفق عليه مشكوة ج ٢ ص ٢٦٧)

"O young men, those amongst you who can afford to get married, should marry - for this will be a means of restraining the eyes from casting evil glances and keeping one pure and chaste."

٢) عن أبي أمامة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما استفاد المؤمن بعد تقوى الله خيرا له من زوجة صالحة إن أمرها أطاعته وإن نظر اليها سرته

(رواه ابن ماجه والطبراني وله شواهد أنظر المقاصد الحسنة ص ٣٦٢)

"After the fear of Allâh, a believer gains nothing better for himself than a good wife."

٣) عن جابر رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن المرأة تقبل فى صورة شيطان وتدبر فى صورة شيطان اذا أحدكم أعجبته المرأة فوقعت فى قلبه فليعمد الى امرأته فليواقعها فان ذلك يرد ما فى نفسه

(رواه مسلم كما فى المشكوة ج ٢ ص ٢٦٨)

Hadrat Jâbir ﷺ reported that Rasûlullâh ﷺ saw a woman, and thereafter he came to his wife, Hadrat Zainab ﷺ (while she was tanning leather). He had sexual relations with her. He then went to his companions and told them:

"The woman advances and returns in the shape of a devil, so when one of you sees a woman, he should come to his wife, for that will repel what he feels in his heart."

This shows how Rasûlullâh ﷺ tried to protect his companions and the Muslims at large from the evil of sexual urges by advising them to marry and satisfy their sexual desires through the normal, lawful way. And whenever there is extra pressure on them because of sexual motivation, they should at once try to quench their urge in a lawful way. This approach to the problem is sure to make individual lives pure and chaste, leading to the establishment of a pure and chaste society.

MANNER AND REQUIREMENTS OF MARRIAGE

Once a boy becomes of age, then the preferable way to get him married is firstly to know his opinion about marriage. If he declines to give his opinion, then through his friends, his inner feelings should be determined. If the girl in whom he has an interest becomes known, the parents of the boy should look at the general condition and piety of both the girl and her family. If these are favourable and conducive to an Islamic code of life, then the marriage should be accomplished.

1. CONSENT

One of the primary and fundamental factors of a happy and successful marriage is that it be contracted with mutual consent and agreement. If the boy or girl have not given their consent and are tied in marriage by force, then the seeds of dispute and dissension are sown in their

marriage. Such a marriage is neither lawful in the sight of Allâh nor conducive to the happiness and pleasure of the married couple. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary and vital that the couple to be married be consulted before marriage. This is a law of the Sharî'ah, which is most appropriate and reasonable in respecting the person's integrity and honour of the woman, and this is the best way to preserve and develop happy and peaceful relationships in a family.

2. KAFÂ'AT (COMPATIBILITY)

The Sharî'ah commands and approves that Kafâ'at (equality) between the two parties should be kept in mind at the time of marriage. A man and woman who are close or equal to each other in respect of their morals, education, religious inclination, family ways and culture are more likely to develop a relationship of affection, kindness and love.

If the girl in whom the boy is interested falls under the above law of compatibility, the marriage should be accomplished. However, if the parents perceive a lack of compatibility, they should not allow the nikâh to proceed.

The importance of compatibility in the Islamic Shariah has much significance as mentioned above, and may not be taken as a mark of distinction for some families and disgrace for others. It simply means that the boy and girl who are to marry should be equal in their social status, otherwise any Muslim male can marry any Muslim woman leaving aside the forbidden categories. It is a simple fact that for the success of married life, it is necessary that there be maximum possible co-ordination,

conformity and similarity of habits, qualities, manner of life, family traditions and social and economic circumstances between the partners so that they may be able to live together and maintain their relations cordially and peacefully. This is the real object of compatibility and not because the one belongs to a noble and honourable family and the other to a low and degraded one.

Allâh knows who is honoured and who is low and disgraced. The important thing is status and honour in the sight of Allâh and not worldly honour. All humans are equal in His sight. They will gain honour in His sight through their good and virtuous actions and not through their worldly positions.

3. SEEING EACH OTHER

This is another requirement of a marriage for it helps in establishing and developing love and affection between the married couple. It is stated in *Abû Dâwûd* on the authority of Hadrat Jâbir ﷺ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said:

إذا خطب أحدكم المرأة فإن استطاع أن ينظر الى ما يدعوه الى نكاحها فليفعل

(رواه أبو داؤد كما في المشكوة ج ٢ ص ٢٦٨)

"When one of you seeks a woman in marriage, if by looking at her he is induced to marry her, he should do so."

Although in the instance quoted above, only the man is asked to see the woman, Muslim scholars and jurists agree that a woman has an equal and similar right to see

the man. Marriage is a very serious matter and a life-long partnership. It should not be taken lightly and settled in the dark. Correct information about the girl can also be obtained through trustworthy persons. Care should, however, be taken that it does not cause annoyance or inconvenience to the girl and her family, and better still if it is done without their knowledge.

THE BEST CRITERION

The foremost qualification of the bride is as the Holy Qur'ân says, "Marry pious women." Hence, the bridegroom should exercise greatest caution and consideration. The following points should be considered in making the correct choice:

Abu Hurairah ﷺ reports that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said:

تنكح المرأة لاربع لمالها ولحسبها ولجمالها ولدينها فاظفر بذات الدين تربت يداك

(متفق عليه مشكوة ج ٢ ص ٢٦٧)

"A woman may be married for four reasons: for her wealth, her status, her beauty and her piety. So succeed with the one who is religious and thereby prosper." Rasûlullâh ﷺ exhorted his followers to make religious piety the first criterion of choice when selecting a wife. And there is no denying the fact that if a Muslim acquires piety and abstinence, it is mostly due to a virtuous wife who in the words of Rasûlullâh ﷺ is: "The best object and benefit of the world."

If careful thought is given, then it becomes clear that the first three things, in reality, can become a means of

misfortune for a person. For example beauty is a quality which attracts the heart, but on the other hand beauty is transitory. It is a guest for a while, which eventually fades away with the lapse of time. Another point to consider is that if only beauty is sought, it can become a source of pride for the wife. Will it be possible for the husband to tolerate the pride and arrogance of the wife? Another disadvantage is that her beauty is also admired by others. It must not happen that other people cause misfortune to the marriage. In addition, as you are a lover of beauty, she also loves beauty. It must not happen that while you love her, she hates you.

While you are prepared to sacrifice everything for her, she plans to remain aloof from you. Can such a marriage yield happiness? Therefore, Rasûlullâh ﷺ disliked that only beauty be sought. However, if beauty is found with piety, there can be no better benefit in this world.

Others attach importance to wealth and riches. They believe that in wealth and riches lie honour. Remember that wealth is more transitory than beauty. Will her family allow her to come with the family's wealth and if it comes, is it manly enough on your part, being the head, to be favoured with the riches and wealth of your wife?

If she is of a wealthy family, her demands and requests will be of that standard. It is clear that the quota of an elephant conforms to its size. How is it possible that an affluent girl will be satisfied with your simple bread? Consequently, grief and sorrow will become an everyday affair. For this reason, intelligent people have rightly said that the wife should be less wealthier than the husband in

order for the wife to be thankful and appreciative for the favours of the husband.

Conversely, it is clear that if there exists no piety, then generally wealth, beauty and noble lineage hold no worth. In addition, in a situation where there exists no piety, the chastity and modesty of a woman is in danger. Chastity and modesty are after all, the hallmarks of a woman. Therefore, the most important quality to seek in a girl is piety.

The girl should be somewhat learned. She should have a sound knowledge of Dîn. She should not be ignorant. She should also be acquainted with managing household work.

The age of the girl should be somewhat less than that of the boy. For a young boy, a virgin is more suitable so that in accordance with the saying of the hadîth, a lot of love and affection will be created between the two.

The girl should be healthy. She should not be afflicted with a fatal or permanent disease. If she is from the boy's family, it will create closer family ties.

These points should also be kept in mind by the girl's family in regards to the boy.

PROPOSING

Now if the intention for proposing is made, then accordingly, one should make wudû (ablution) and perform four rakâts of Nafl Salâh. The first two should

be made with the intention of Salâtul Hâjât (seeking Allâh's help) and the second two with the intention of Salâtul Istikhârah (seeking Allâh's guidance).

Hadrat Jâbir ﷺ reports: Rasûlullâh ﷺ taught us to make istikhârah concerning all matters just as he would teach us a sûrah of the Qur'ân. He would say: When any of you wishes to take up any task, he should perform two rak'at of salâh other than that of fard (meaning two rak'ât of nafl with the intention of istikhârah). He should then say (in supplication):

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْتَخِيْرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيْمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ. اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هٰذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِيْ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَمَعَاشِيْ وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِيْ فَاقْدُرْهُ لِيْ وَيَسِّرْهُ لِيْ ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِيْ فِيْهِ. وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هٰذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِيْ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَمَعَاشِيْ وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِيْ فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّيْ وَاصْرِفْنِيْ عَنْهُ وَاقْدُرْ لِيَ الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِيْ بِهِ.

"O Allâh, I ask of You the good through Your knowledge and I ask You to grant me the ability through Your power and ask You of Your great bounty. For surely You have power and I have none, You know all and I do not know, and You are the Knower of the unseen. O Allâh, if, in Your knowledge, this matter be good for me with regards to my Dîn (religion), my livelihood and the outcome of

my affair [in the near and distant future], then ordain it for me and make it easy for me and bless me there in. But, if in Your knowledge, this matter be bad for me with regards to my Dîn, my livelihood and the outcome of my affair [in the near or distant future], then turn it away from me and turn me away from it, and ordain for me good where ever it may be and cause me to be pleased [with it].

Thereafter, one should make du'â that Allâh blesses one with a good and pious companion and, furthermore, Allâh, through His unseen means, completes one's desire. For proposing, there is no special or prescribed method. This is an agreement between the parents of the boy and the girl. The agreement can be concluded by verbal discussion or through correspondence or through any other means.

The acceptance of a proposal is a type of agreement and promise. As far as possible, this agreement should be upheld and accomplished. Otherwise there will be a breach of trust, which is detestable in Islam.

Thereafter, the date of the Nikâh should be set. The sooner the Nikâh, the better and more advantageous it will be for the couple-to-be and the families. Care should be taken that until the Nikâh is performed, the boy and the girl are regarded as strangers in the eyes of the Sharî'ah. It will therefore, not be lawful for them to meet and go around together. In setting the date for the Nikâh, one should abstain from wrong customs which are prevalent. Then the Nikâh should be performed on the prescribed date in the presence of relatives and friends

and with complete simplicity. Care should also be taken that one proposal should not be made upon another. It is narrated by Abu Hurairah ﷺ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "No one should make a proposal of marriage against the proposal of his brother (until he weds or the offer is withdrawn)."

THE ETIQUETTE OF NIKÂH

Nikâh has etiquette. The most important one is that one should have a good intention. Verily every deed is according to the intention made for it. Even a purely secular act becomes an act of worship by means of one's intention. Nikâh is a Sunnah, so, the better a person's intention, the more reward will he receive and it should be remembered that in one deed, several intentions can be made. For each intention a separate reward will be received. At the time of Nikâh, the following intentions can be made:

1. To get married is a Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. If a person practices on a sunnah, he will be rewarded.

2. By Nikâh, a person saves himself from committing a sin.

3. By means of Nikâh, a person's lust is kept under control. His thoughts are controlled and his eyes are saved from looking at undesirable things.

4. Allâh ﷻ will by means of Nikâh, bless one with pious children.

5. Through Nikâh, the children born will be a means of addition to the Ummah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

6. Allâh ﷻ will bless the couple with such children who will strive for Islâm. In this way the Ummah will benefit and the parents will be rewarded.

7. If one's young children passed away, they will become a means of the parents' entry into Jannah and a means of their salvation from hell.

CONDITIONS

In brief, the following are the necessary conditions and requirements that should be fulfilled in every marriage between a Muslim man and a Muslim woman because in the eyes of Allâh, it is a legal contract with certain conditions and requirements, which must be fulfilled.

PUBLICITY

Marriage is a declaration by the marrying couple, that they have united in wedlock and that they want the public to know this fact about them in order that they may in future be treated as such for all social purposes. Rasûlullâh ﷺ strongly urged his companions to publicise their marriages and at least to have two witnesses. To publicize a marriage means that it should be performed in a public place (among relatives) gathered at the time of the marriage ceremony. However, indecent and luxurious amusements are against the practice of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the spirit of the teaching of Islam. A noble way of

declaring a marriage is that the Nikâh be performed in a Masjid after a Fard Salâh. It is most preferable to perform the Nikâh on a Friday after the Asr Salâh. In this way, the blessing of the place as well as the time can be attained. It is meritorious if some Ulama and pious people are gathered for the Nikâh, so that their Du'âs can also be included. The Nikâh should be performed by an Âlim or a pious person.

WITNESSES

The Islamic law requires that a marriage cannot be contracted without the presence of at least two male witnesses or one male and two females. They must be sane, adult Muslims. Rasûlullâh ﷺ condemned marriages without witnesses. According to Ibn Abbâs ؓ, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Adulteresses are those who marry themselves without evidence." All the companions of Rasûlullâh ﷺ were of the opinion that without the two witnesses, a marriage ceremony is void. Thus the Nikâh should not be made secretly. The difference between Nikâh (marriage) and adultery is that fornication is committed secretly while marriage is done openly.

DOWRY (MAHR)

Another factor which forms part of the marriage contract, is the *mahr* (dowry) given by the husband to his wife at the marriage ceremony. It is enjoined by the Islamic law in the following words: "And give them their dowry willingly to women (as an obligation) but if they, of their own, remit a portion of the dowry, you may enjoy it with

pleasure." Rasûlullâh ﷺ explained the payment of dowries and their amount in many Ahâdîth, but there are no fixed amounts regarding the *mahr* in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The actual amount is determined by the social and financial position of the man and the wish of the bride. "Allâh does not burden any human being with a responsibility heavier than he can bear." Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The marriage which produces the most blessing is that which involves the least expenses." This is obviously not a mere statement of fact, but also an exhortation to the Ummah to keep the marriages as simple as possible. It also shows that no unnecessary difficulties should be created in respect of marriage. The parents of the girl should not demand anything beyond the financial and social position of the husband nor the parents of the boy anything beyond the resources of the girl's family. No extra burden in the form of a loan for the marriage ceremony should be created. This is unnecessary and Islam does not require this sort of marriage in which gifts or feasts create great burden and inconvenience for the families of the married couple.

Look at what the dowry of Fâtimah ؓ was. She only received two sheets, two cushions, a quilted bedding, two bangles, pillows, a blanket, a cup, a handmill, a waterskin and a waterjug.

Hadrat Hakîmul Ummah, Moulânâ Ashraf Alî Thânwî *rahimahullâh* states that the paraphernalia given to a bride should be simple - not beyond one's means. It should include items that one requires and one should not announce what one is giving to one's children. By giving gifts to one's children, one creates closer family ties with

one's children. For this, there is no need to make a public announcement. All these facts can be deduced from the practice of Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

THE SERMON OF MARRIAGE

A sermon is delivered before the Nikâh. This is a Sunnah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. These days, it has also been reduced to a mere formality, otherwise it includes a complete code of conduct for the couple.

After reciting the khutbah, the offer and acceptance will be made. The groom must clearly and loudly in the presence of the witnesses say, "I have accepted."

The nikâh is now complete and both the man and woman have become husband and wife. It is mustahab (preferable) to distribute dry dates after the nikâh. However, care should be taken that the sanctity of the Musjid is not violated. After the nikâh, friends and relatives should congratulate the bridegroom.

FELICITATION AND PRAYER

Various forms of felicitations, on the occasion of marriage are current in the world. Rasûlullâh ﷺ, however, has taught a formula which is more in the nature of a prayer for the happiness and well being of the couple.

Abu Hurairah ؓ relates that when Rasûlullâh ﷺ congratulated anyone on his marriage, he would say:

بَارَكَ اللهُ فِيْكُمَا وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَكُمَا بِخَيْرٍ وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْكُمُ الطَّيِّبَ

"May Allâh bless you and bestow His favour on you and keep you united forever in goodness and welfare and may He produce good from you."

In another hadîth, Rasûlullâh ﷺ says: "Whoever marries a woman, should make the following du'â:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا فِيْهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَعُوْذُ
بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيْهَا وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ

"O Allâh, I beseech You for the goodness and virtue You have blessed her with and embedded in her nature. Favour me with it, and I seek Your refuge from her wickedness and the vice in her nature. Protect me from it."

THE ISLAMIC MANNER OF THE BRIDE'S DEPARTURE

The bride is then taken to her husband after the nikâh. This should also be done with extreme simplicity. The bride can either go with the womenfolk of her household or with the womenfolk of the husband's family.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ sent his daughter, Fâtimah ؓ to her husband, Alî ؓ with Umme Aiman ؓ, his female servant.

There is neither any specific method of following when

sending the bride away nor should any custom be followed. It is also not necessary to send her together with her gifts at that time. The gifts and belongings can be dispatched later also.

THE FIRST NIGHT

When the newly-wed couple meet for the first time, a certain etiquette has to be followed. The bride and the groom should not spend the day prior to the wedding in any activity that will exhaust them. They should rest sufficiently before the day of the nikâh so that they are fresh and energetic when they meet.

If they have the means, they should adopt the means of comfort like eating fruit, sweetmeats etc., applying perfume and beautifying the room. Some people go to extremes when doing this and spend thousands of rands in beautifying the bridal vehicle. This is extravagance and a waste of money. It is sinful to do so and it is an act of shaytân.

If one cannot pay the dowry in cash, one should give some suitable gift to the wife. Without giving anything at all, it is contrary to manhood to benefit from her. At the first meeting, the husband and wife should make Salâm to one another:

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Then the husband must place his right hand on her forehead and read the following Du'â:

اَللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا فِيْهَا وَخَيْرِ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَعُوْذُ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيْهَا وَشَرِّ مَا جَبَلْتَهَا عَلَيْهِ

"O Allâh, I ask you for her good and the good You have placed in her and the good on which You created her. I seek refuge fro.. her evil, the evil which is in her and the evil You have created in her."

Then after making wudû, the couple must perform two Rakâts of Salâtul Hâjat, and make Du'â for a good and happy life and that Allâh bestow them (the couple) with good and pious children. Then they should engage themselves in some beneficial talk showing importance to the obedience of Allah's commands and the temporariness of the world. The love of the world and wealth should be taken out of the heart. Through wisdom and tact, one should become more free and open in the discussion, trying to discover each other's temperament.

It is obvious that the bride will not be completely free and open to talk to the husband immediately after the nikâh. As sexual inclinations vary with every individual, the bride and bridegroom will have to display patience with each other. Sexual union on the first night of marriage is not the most important act between the couple. There is sufficient time during the rest of their lives to practice this union. Their first intimate association gives them an opportunity to know each other more closely, to assess each other's feelings and attitudes. Excitement, expectation or fear of an intimate union on the part of the bride may bring about a reluctance in performing intercourse.

The bridegroom should regard this moment as an opportunity to show his consideration for her tender feelings, to demonstrate that sex is a secondary aspect of marriage and that her health and feelings mean more to him.

Sometimes, out of bashfulness or consideration for the bride's feelings, the groom may also show reluctance to be sexually intimate. Then it is the bride's turn to display her appreciation and tolerance towards him.

If one is hasty in performing intercourse, it could lead to several harms:
1. The wife will have the mindset that the object of nikâh is only to fulfill one's desires. .

2. A woman is naturally shy and modest. She will not be prepared for intercourse so soon and if the husband does convince her, her desire may not reach its climax. As a result, the husband will satisfy himself but her desires will remain unfulfilled. She will not experience any enjoyment.

3. The hymen is torn during the first intercourse and the wife, due to not being so open and familiar to the husband and not experiencing full satisfaction, will experience distress and uneasiness. This could result in her detesting her husband.

In order to draw her closer, remember that a new world opens up after nikâh. One is confronted by all kinds of emotions and misleading feelings. It is highly essential to control oneself on such an occasion. One should not display a completely amorous and madly-in-love

emotion. This will make the husband like a servant in her eyes and then she will begin making all kinds of demands.

The husband, on the other hand, must not be completely severe and harsh and regard her as his maid or slave. The husband should not frown at every statement of hers and try to overawe her. Behaving in this way does not create awe. In fact, this could lead to feelings of detest and hatred in the wife's heart.

The wife has come as the queen of chastity in the house. She is naturally your beloved life partner. She will be of assistance to you in your internal affairs. Accordingly, the husband should show great affection while at the same time maintaining his position. This will make the nikâh flourish as well as maintain the husband's rank.

THE ETIQUETTE FOR INTERCOURSE

Islamic education is very comprehensive and embraces all fields of study. It has provided very useful and appropriate sex education to married couples. It has rejected views of both extremes. On the one hand are those who take sex as a means of satisfying their carnal desires and indulge in acts of purely sensuous lust and obscenity which brings the relationship to shame, disgrace and mockery, and there are those who completely abstain from it and regard even ordinary talk about it as sinful and shameful. Islam has suggested a middle path between these two extreme views. It advocates that the marital relationship is neither sinful so that one should completely abstain from it nor is it a

plaything so that one should make it a source of lust and sensuality and indulge freely with anyone and everyone. It permits sexual relationship within certain limits and it places certain obligations on both the husband and his wife.
The sexual instinct in man is like that of hunger and thirst; it is very strong and aggressive and it is necessary and desirable to moderate it.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said that cohabiting with one's wife is also an act of charity and one is rewarded for it. The Sahâbah ﷺ asked him whether a person who fulfils his desires with his wife will also be rewarded. Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked that if he fulfilled his desire in the wrong place, won't he be sinning? The Sahâbah ﷺ answered in the affirmative. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said that he will certainly be rewarded for abstaining from sin and opting for the halâl place only.

The fundamental nature and purpose of the family relationship is described as:

نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ

"Your wives are a tillage unto you; so approach your tillage however you desire." (Qur'ân)

Very delicate matters relating to sexual relationship between husband and wife are mentioned here in a very comprehensive way without offending any cultural or social customs or personal considerations. Manner, time and place are very significant in sex, and Rasûlullâh ﷺ fully kept all this in mind and set a very high standard in

this matter. As he loved purity and cleanliness in everything, he did not forget this in sexual education. Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of or treated lightly, or to be indulged in excessively. It is compared to a husband's tillage. It is a serious affair to him; he sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. But he does not sow out of season nor cultivate in a manner which will injure or exhaust the soil.

The simile of the husband and the wife as the farmer and the farm contains encyclopedic knowledge of sexual relations.

The farmer has a great attachment to his farm and looks after it all the time. He has to water his field, plough and fertilize it and prepare it for sowing. He does a lot of preparation before the seed is sown. This is essential for securing a good quality of crop.

Likewise in the case of the husband and the wife, it is important for them to indulge in foreplay. This includes kissing and caressing. The husband must spend sufficient time with her to arouse and prepare her for the act of procreation. The degree of sensitivity varies considerably in different individuals but once the husband knows his partner, he can very effectively arouse her. If he overlooks this aspect, the damage could sometimes be irreparable because the woman, unlike the farm, is very sensitive and has feelings and very strong passions which need full satisfaction and attention.

All these preparatory exercises are fully implied in the simile contained in the above verse of the Holy Qur'ân.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ on many occasions explained to his companions though not in the same words, the desirability and necessity of playing with the wife.

It is related in the Ahâdîth that when Hadrat Jâbir ؓ told Rasûlullâh ﷺ that he had married a widow, he replied; "Why did you not marry a virgin with whom you could play and who could play with you?" In another tradition Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Marry women who are loving and have very prolific wombs, and are most satisfied with little."

This shows the importance and significance of foreplay. It is a well-known fact that a woman needs usually more time to reach her climax. If this is ignored, then she remains unsatisfied after the man has had his orgasm. If, however, the woman reaches her climax first, there is no harm, as the man can always follow her, whereas the opposite is disastrous because the man may not be able to help the woman to reach her climax and this may lead to many psychological complications. This is the first purpose of love play.

The second purpose is that it stimulates the glandular secretions in the woman, which lubricate the vagina, thus facilitating intermission. In the man, foreplay provokes erection and urethral secretions which, also act as a lubricant. Without erection, coition is not possible, and without the aforesaid secretions in both partners, there is a definite danger of damaging the female organ at the time of penetration.

The act of procreation should take place at such a time

when there is a counter-balance in the temperament of both partners i.e. not at extreme hunger nor immediately after a heavy meal or when there is a need to urinate etc. One should not be overpowered by sleep nor should the mind be affected by worries and anxieties.

It is reported from Ibn Abbâs ﷺ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If anyone amongst you should intend to go to his wife, he should say:

بِسْمِ اللهِ اَللّٰهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا

"In the name of Allâh, O Allâh! Save us and the progeny You may bestow upon us from the mischief of the devil."

Sheikh Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawî *rahmatullâhi 'alaih* has observed in "*Ash'atul Lam-ât*" that if a prayer like this is not made at the time of copulation and only the sexual urge is satisfied like the animals, the child that is born as a result of it will not be saved from the evil influence of the devil. The Sheikh further states: "It is the main reason why the morals of the present generation are not good."

The Hadîth is quite significant in the sense that it shows how Islamic ideals generate Allah-consciousness and piety, even in these activities of life which are generally looked down upon by other religions.

It is also not advisable to be completely naked during the act of copulation. Hadrat 'Âishah ﷺ said: "I never saw Rasûlullâh's ﷺ private parts." It is necessary that the partners cover themselves during cohabitation.

HARÂM ACTS

Bashfulness is a special characteristic of women. If they lose it, they lose all charm. It is reported from Rasûlullâh ﷺ who said: "When you have no shame, do what you like."

Oral and anal sex is extremely shameful and detestable acts. No noble and honourable person can commit such acts, nor can Islam or humanity condone them. Abu Hurairah ؓ relates that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The man who performs an unnatural act (through the anus) with his wife lies under the curse of Allâh." The Jews used to come to their wives from the backs i.e. from the anus. This was made unlawful by Rasûlullâh ﷺ. He directed man to come by the natural way (i.e. vaginal canal) in whatever position they like. Coition is an act of procreation whereas these unnatural practices (oral sex and anal sex) are not only filthy but unproductive, harmful and injurious to the health.

Allâh has not made women a happy hunting ground for man to merely derive carnal pleasure, but a tillage in which they are required to sow seeds and reap the harvest. This simile also makes it clear that such unnatural acts have no place in Islamic society.

Even animals do not satisfy their sexual desires in an unnatural way. Human beings who are guilty of it are even worse than the animals and offer a living proof of the correctness of the Qur'ânic verse:

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِيْنَ

"Then when We reduced them to the lowest of the low."

At the time of copulation, care should be taken that one does not face the Qiblah, as this shows disrespect towards the Qiblah. It is essential that the mouth be cleaned with a *miswâk* or toothbrush before copulation. Cleanliness and purity are itself necessary in Islam and during this time it is more important because if any bad odour prevails, it will cause distress to the partners and affect the situation adversely.

It is also advisable not to talk during the actual act of copulation, nor at the time of ejaculation, or to imagine having the act with some woman besides your wife.

Equally important as foreplay is 'afterplay'. Often a woman feels that a man is only interested in her union for lust. To clear this misunderstanding, the man must give her assurance by paying more attention to her after the union by continuing his sweet talk and fondness of her, otherwise she will feel insecure. Also one should not withdraw from one's wife until she attains satisfaction otherwise a hasty withdrawal can adversely affect the woman's health. Generally the husband reaches climax before the wife. He should therefore ensure that he fully satisfies her until she reaches climax also. Withdrawing before climax is reached is very frustrating for her and her rights will not be fulfilled.

After cohabitation, both the husband and wife should wash their private parts (i.e. make *istinjâ*). If one wishes to repeat cohabitation, it is preferable to make ablution as

this will make it more satisfying.

APPROPRIATE TIME

Generally speaking, sexual intercourse is desirable when the passions of the husband and the wife are high. It is the duty of the wife to win her husband's mind by submitting to his sexual desire. Rasûlullâh ﷺ once said: "Whoever sees a woman, who appears appealing to him, let him go to his wife, because there is with his wife the like of what is with her." Abu Hurairah ؓ reported that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If a man invites his wife to bed and she does not come, and the husband spends the night angry with her, the angels curse her till the morning." The conjugal act is the right of the husband and the woman cannot deny him this right without any valid reason, as there is a strong likelihood of his going astray and resorting to immoral practices for his sexual satisfaction. The same is the right of the woman also.

No man or woman from outside should be told about the sexual gratification of the husband and wife, as that would provide others a chance to meddle in their private affairs. This is not only sinful but highly detestable in the sight of Allâh ﷻ. It is unfortunate that now-a-days husbands feel proud of reading the love letters of their wives before friends and vice versa in order to impress before others their attachment to their spouses. Not only that, they do not feel shy or hesitate in describing their sexual relations with their wives. What a tragedy and bankruptcy indeed.

HARÂM TIME

It is Harâm to have sexual intercourse with the wife during her menstrual period. The Qur'ân says:

وَيَسْئَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيْضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذىً فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيْضِ وَلاَ تَقْرَبُوْهُنَّ حَتّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَاِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوْهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ

"Say (O Mohammed), it is impure, so abstain from women (from having sexual intercourse) during their period of menstrual discharge. And do not go near them until they have purified themselves (upon the termination of their period.)"

Hadrat 'Âishah ﵂ said: "When one amongst us (the wives of Rasûlullâh ﷺ menstruated, Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked her to tie a waist wrapper over her body." (i.e. to cover her private part which according to Imâm Abu Hanîfah is between the navel and the knee) and then he embraced her.

In another Hadith, Hadrat 'Âishah ﵂ said: "Whenever Rasûlullâh ﷺ wanted to fondle anyone of us during her menses, he used to order her to put on an Izâr." Hadrat 'Âishah ﵂ added: "None of you could control his sexual desires as Rasûlullâh ﷺ could." The jurists have concluded from the Qur'ân and the traditions that sexual intercourse is unlawful during the menstrual discharge.

However, the husband is allowed to sleep with, fondle, love and caress the wife (provided there is no possibility

of sexual intercourse). But she must keep her body covered from her navel to her knee. If, Allâh forbid, sexual intercourse takes place during menses, then it is necessary to make Taubah and Istighfâr (repentance) and it is preferable to give some *Sadaqah* (charity).

The husband should not let the wife perceive a decrease in his love during menstruation. However, he should completely abstain from intercourse. The wife is not merely for fulfilling one's desires or for procreating. She, as a life-partner, is there to be loved and for the husband to achieve solace and peace of mind. Just her presence should remove all the fatigue of the husband and make him completely comfortable.

If the days of her menses are according to her habit and the husband wishes to have sexual intercourse and the wife says her menses have started, then it is necessary for her husband to believe her even if the wife is not religiously inclined. If her menses stop after ten days, it is permissible to have intercourse before she has taken a bath. If bleeding stops before ten days, then sexual intercourse is not allowed before she has taken a bath.

If however, one Fard Salâh time has passed, i.e. one Fard Salâh has now become Qadâ on her after her bleeding has stopped and until then she has not taken a bath, then too it is permissible to have intercourse. But it is not permissible to remain impure for so long. It is, however, Harâm to have intercourse before the end of her normal habit.

If a woman bleeds for less than three days and three nights and then remains clean for fifteen days, it is

regarded as "Istihâdah" (bleeding due to illness). If she has no set habit, then any bleeding beyond the full ten days and ten nights is also regarded as Istihâdah. If she has a fixed habit e.g. seven days and she bleeds in a particular month for more than ten days, then bleeding beyond her habit of seven days is counted as Istihâdah. Sexual intercourse is allowed during Istihâdah even if she is bleeding, because the Sharî'ah considers her in a state of purity; therefore there is no sin in having intercourse during Istihâdah.

HOW OFTEN?

How often should sexual union be performed? There is no fixed amount mentioned regarding this. It depends upon the natural capacity of each individual and the willingness of the partner. Mutual understanding in this respect is very important. The amount will therefore differ from individual to individual. Physicians have written that one should have intercourse once a month. If one has an urge, then twice a month and if this is also not sufficient, then once a week. The amount of once a week has been hinted at in the hadîth. For example, the hadîth indirectly encourages us to have intercourse and a bath and prepare for Jumu'ah so that if one's gaze falls on a woman while going for Jumu'ah Salâh, it will not create any evil thoughts in one's mind. And because one has satisfied one's passions, one is able to concentrate in the salâh and the khutbah.

If there is an urge, one can cohabit more than once a week also. However, it is extremely harmful for the health to cohabit every night or several times in one

night. This is more so in today's times when the health of people is very poor and foods are no more pure and wholesome. Cohabiting excessively destroys one's youth very quickly. The reason for this is that by having intercourse once, a large amount of sperm is released. The body uses vast amounts of good food to replace and create the used up sperm. By having intercourse, a large amount of food is used up and this affects the health adversely. One then becomes the victim of many illnesses, among them premature ejaculation. This decreases the enjoyment of intercourse and one will not be able to satisfy the wife. This results in mutual disputes and quarrels. Due to excessive ejaculation, the sperm becomes very weak and thin, thus having an adverse effect on the offspring. The children born of such a union will be physically very weak.

By continuously having intercourse, the woman who does not have any desire will regard it as a curse. This is also harmful for the relationship. By interfering with the natural desire and inclination of the woman, her sexual appetite will increase tremendously and the husband will be unable to fulfill her desires. The husband will want to sleep or rest while she will invite him to cohâbit. This is the result of not foreseeing the final circumstances and not controlling oneself. The result will only be disgrace and running from doctor to doctor in trying to find the cure. However, the original situation will not revert and this could lead to separation. And if one happens to get an evil friend during this period, he will ingrain evil habits in one and lead one to destruction. Therefore it is highly essential not to waste this valuable capital and use it sparingly so that one's health is maintained and the union can lead to strong and healthy offspring.

THE TIME

In comparison to the day, the night is more appropriate for intercourse. It is not commendable to cohabit with the wife on the first, fifteenth and last dates of the lunar month because the narrations indicate that the *shaytâns* spread around more during these nights. Some jurists have written that it is preferable on a Friday night (the night between Thursday and Friday).

In comparison to the early part of the night, the latter part is preferable so that one can rest and overcome the day's fatigue during the first portion of the night. Another benefit of this is that a person will only spend a short while in the state of *janâbat* (impurity). However, it should not be so late that one does not get an opportunity to rest at all. There should be some time to rest afterwards as well.

METHOD OF INTERCOURSE

Besides the unnatural ways (i.e. oral sex and anal sex), Islam has allowed all forms of sexual union by the natural way (i.e. vaginal canal) in whatever position the couple likes. However two positions are hinted at in the Qur'ân and Hadith, which if practiced can be very beneficial to the act of procreation. The first is the common and natural way whereby the woman lies on her back and the man on top of her. By a careful study of the Qur'ân, one may find that this position is hinted at in the Qur'ân as well.

فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلاً خَفِيْفًا

"Then when he (Adam ﷺ) covered her (Hawwâ ﷺ), she bore a light burden."

This is when a woman lies on her back and the man above her in such a way that his organs are parallel to the organs of the woman.

The Hadith explains the second method in the following words:

قَعَدَ بَيْنَ شُعَبِهَا الأَرْبَع ثُمَّ جَهَدَهَا

"If anyone of you sits between the four parts of a woman, then he tires her out..."

The four parts of a woman refer to the two buttocks and the two thighs. This is possible when the woman lies on her back with her legs lifted up. This position is helpful in conceiving because the womb is extended outwards towards the male.

VIRGINITY

If marriage is contracted to a virgin, then in the initial stages of the sexual union, the woman goes through a great amount of pain when her hymen is penetrated. She may become fearful. During such a time, the husband must be careful, be gentle and decrease his movements.

If after nikâh, one finds the hymen torn and the moral character of the woman seems to be Islamically good, then one should not doubt the character of the woman, as

Islamic jurists and medical practitioners have mentioned that sometimes this is due to jumping, falling, excess of menses and at times due to not being married for a long time.

Nabî ﷺ taught the Sahâbah ؓ that they should wash themselves after cohabitation.

If for some reason, the husband cannot have intercourse with the wife, Sharî'ah has recommended keeping fast on such an occasion to protect one's chastity. This will keep his gaze low and preserve his chastity. The same applies to a person who cannot marry for whatever reason. He should keep fast regularly.

OBLIGATORY BATH

The taking of a bath is rendered obligatory after sexual intercourse, menstrual discharge, childbirth or a wet dream. There is consensus of opinion amongst the jurists that sexual intercourse necessitates a bath whether there is seminal emission or not. Both the male and female should wash their organs thoroughly so as to prevent any diseases from arising.

If semen is discharged in excitement while asleep or awake, bathing becomes obligatory no matter how it is discharged, e.g. by touching the opposite sex or by having a dream.

If a wet dream has occurred whilst sleeping but on awakening, no stains of semen are found on the clothes, bathing is not obligatory. In the case of a definite

discharge of semen, bathing becomes obligatory. It is reported that Rasûlullâh ﷺ was asked about a woman who sees in her dream what a man sees in his dream (sexual dream). He said if she experiences what a man experiences, she should take a bath.

If a person sees moisture but does not remember having a dream, he should take a bath. If he saw a dream but does not find any moisture, then he is under no obligation to take a bath. However, in this case it is preferable to take a bath.

To remain in the state of *janâbat* (impurity) causes lack of blessings. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said that if one remains in the unclean state, the angels of mercy do not enter the house. This refers to a lazy person who does not perform ghusl promptly and even allows his salâh to become qadâ. However, if one sleeps away for a while without taking a bath, it is permissible.

THE MANNER OF TAKING A BATH

Hadrat Âishah ؓ has reported that when Rasûlullâh ﷺ took a bath after a seminal emission, he first washed his hands, then his private parts with his left hand, then poured water over his left hand with his right hand. The he performed ablution as he did for salâh, then he moistened his fingers in the water and moved them through his hair till he was satisfied that the water reached the base of the hair. Then he poured three hands-full over his head. Then he poured water over his whole body and finally he washed his feet.

Care should be taken that water flows into the beard and nails. It should reach the base of the hair whether thick or sparse. A woman however, need not undo her braids if the water reaches the roots. While bathing one should not sit facing the Qiblah. If any part of the body, even to the extent of a hair's breadth is left dry, the bath shall not be complete. In such a case, only the part which has remained dry should be washed and it is not necessary to repeat the bath again. It is better to take a bath in a sitting position on a stool etc.

WALÎMAH

To be married to a woman of one's liking is a great favour of Allâh and a matter of rejoicing. Walîmah (a meal after consummating the marriage) is sunnah and an outward expression of the feelings of gratitude and pleasure.

After consummating the marriage, one should according to one's means, invite one's relatives, friends and the pious people. If one's financial position is very weak, one should feed the people whatever one can afford. It does not have to be a sumptuous meal. There is no need to take a loan and invite the people. Rasûlullâh ﷺ even made *walîmah* once by spreading a cloth on the ground and telling the Sahâbah ؓ to bring whatever food they had. He gathered all the food they brought and fed them from it. What more simplicity can there be in Islam?

Rasûlullâh ﷺ requested Abdur Rahmân Ibn Auf ؓ to

Rasûlullâh ﷺ did not fix the nature and limits of the walîmah, leaving it to the status and social standing of the parties concerned. Rasûlullâh ﷺ encouraged it but disliked unnecessary decoration and show, by which people try to make such ceremonies a means of pride, glory and nobility. It is highly detestable to invite only the affluent people and leave out the poor ones. Such a feast is called the 'worst of food' in the hadîth. One should invite people of all classes.

It is related by Abdullah Ibn Umar ؓ that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When anyone of you is invited to the feast of walîmah, he should accept the invitation." However, if harâm acts take place like music, photography etc. then such a walîmah should be shunned. The laws of Allâh take preference to the whims and desires of people. They, by enacting harâm acts in their walîmah, are discouraging the pious from attending. It is therefore not the fault of the pious by not attending such functions.

THE RIGHTS OF BOTH THE SPOUSES

After the nikâh is performed, the husband and wife have rights over each other. Accordingly, each one must be concerned about fulfilling these rights. This will create a strong bond between them.

Both the spouses should consider the temperament of each other. For example, some people have very strong desires in them and require the need to fulfill them often while others have a weak potency, not requiring such a regular fulfillment. Now if the temperament of both the

spouses is the same, there is no problem. However, it happens often that one has a strong desire while the desire of the other is weak. If the husband has a very strong desire, he should control his nature and take the wife's temperament into consideration.

If the husband has a weak nature, he should use tonics to strengthen his potency. It should not happen that he, because of his lack of potency, decreases the amount of intercourse while the wife remains waiting all the time. This has tremendous harms.

Among the tonics that are excellent for potency are the meat of birds, eggs, fish and almonds etc. In short, the life of the couple will only be pleasant if both tread the path of moderation.

DUTIES OF HUSBAND TOWARDS THE WIFE

Rasûlullâh ﷺ was sent as a model for all classes of men even for the ones who live with wives and children. He brought a complete change in the status and position of women. Equality became the regulating principle of the married parties, and the ideal of wifehood was declared to be love and affection and not subordination. The wife was regarded by Rasûlullâh ﷺ as the best safeguard for the husband against sin, a light-house of virtue that saves the husband from a shipwreck when tossed by the raging waves of passion.

According to Rasûlullâh ﷺ, the following are some of the duties of a husband to his wife:

The husband must treat his wife very kindly. The Qur'ân says, "Treat them kindly."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best of you is he who is the best to his family and I am the best of you to my family."

He further said: "Fear Allâh with regard to women because you have taken them in the trust of Allâh and made their private parts lawful with the word of Allâh."

The husband should not hate his wife, on account of any of her faults, because there is no man and woman without any defect. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Let no believer hate a female believer. If he hates one trait of her character, let him be pleased with her for another trait."

The husband should not be too strict on his wife in order to achieve his aims. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Admonish women with good, for they have been created from the upper part of the ribs and the most crooked thing in a rib is its upper part. If you want to make it straight, it will break. If you leave it, it will remain crooked. So advise women accordingly."

The husband should not beat his wife; this creates bitter feelings and is suicidal to domestic peace and happiness. In some extreme cases, mild hitting is allowed, but not on the face. It should never be inflicted in such a way so as to injure her. The Holy Qur'ân prescribes some preliminary steps before hitting; namely, admonishment and separation from the bed. Rasûlullâh ﷺ discouraged hitting by saying: "The best of you is he who is the best to his wife." He further said: "Never hit your partner like

how you hit your slave."

The husband should spend some time for amusement and enjoyment with his wife. This strengthens the nuptial knot more firmly. Rasûlullâh ﷺ used to engage in sport like jogging with Hadrat 'Âishah ؓ. However, the Shar'î limits should always be taken into consideration.

SHAR'Î RIGHTS ON THE HUSBAND

The husband has to provide the wife with food, clothing and an abode. This will be according to the means of the husband. The wife is not obligated to earn a living and provide herself with food and clothing. Neither has she been created for this. The husband must take the wife's taste into consideration as long as it is not un-Islamic.

If the husband cannot provide a separate house, it is essential for him to provide a separate room where the couple can meet privately without any interference. If there are other family members living in the same house, then it is not correct for her to freely come and go in front of *'ghair mahram'* individuals. The house should have separate areas for males and females. Besides food, clothing and an abode, the husband should spend something extra on his wife which will be considered a charitable act. He must not only be content with the obligatory duties. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best wealth a man spends is what he spends on his family."

The husband should give her education in the fundamental articles of Islam, health and hygiene. He

must pay her *mahr* otherwise she can resist the conjugal right of the husband.

The husband shall regard his wife as a safeguard against immorality and as a consolation in distress. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "The best of properties is a remembering tongue, a grateful heart and a believing wife who helps him in faith."

CHARACTER

Allâh has blessed the males with many qualities which are found less among females. Bravery, courage, honour and authority are found in a complete form among males. It is for this reason that Allâh has granted the males authority over females. It is the responsibility of the husband to keep in check the character of the wife. The husband should immediately caution the wife if he finds the wife freely mixing and conversing with the servants of the house or other strangers. It is easier to prohibit the wife initially than to maintain silence at the time of the incident and allow it to become more serious later on. If the husband condones this conduct of the wife of mixing with strangers, then he is a cuckold (*dayyûth*) and he has been cursed in the Ahâdîth. The wife is a very valuable asset and should be carefully safeguarded. One should not allow people to come in and out of one's house unnecessarily.

DUTIES OF THE WIFE TOWARDS THE HUSBAND

Rasûlullâh ﷺ left the most ideal instruction about duties of the wife towards the husband. The wife is bound to live with her husband. The Holy Qur'ân says: "Your wives are your 'farms', so go to your 'farms' however you like." Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When a man calls his wife to fulfill his desire, she should come to him although she may be near a stove (cooking)." This indicates that if the husband has a desire for intercourse, it is permissible during the daytime as well. Rasûlullâh ﷺ also said: "Whenever a man calls his wife to fulfill his desire and she refuses and he passes the night in an angry mood, the angels curse her till she gets up at dawn."

The wife should be obedient to her husband in all respects and administer his comforts even by cutting short her optional religious duties. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "No woman shall keep an optional fast except with the permission of her husband."

She must guard her private parts from foreign touch. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When a woman says her prayers, fasts her month and guards her private parts, let her enter paradise by whichever door she likes."

The wife should protect the property and belongings of the husband. After her marriage, the home should be regarded as her own. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "When the husband goes out on a journey, she should guard her chastity and look after his property." She should not spend his wealth against his wishes or in wrong avenues.

Even in necessary avenues, she must not be extravagant. She must be thrifty at all times.

The wife should learn how to run a house properly. She must organize and arrange the house according to the temperament of the husband within Shar'î limits. A neat and tidy house and a well-mannered, well-dressed and pious wife are a means to salvation and Allah's pleasure. By maintaining her beauty and glamour and dressing properly for her husband's sake, she will be a means of safeguarding his chastity and morals. He will not be inclined to other women.

The wife should not leave the house without the prior permission of the husband nor should she visit houses where her husband would not like her to go, nor allow such persons to enter her house whom the husband does not like.

The wife should try to please the husband. This is the secret of a successful married life as well as the means of pleasing Allâh and attaining paradise. She must not frown and become upset for every trivial matter. This causes a decrease in the love of the relationship and becomes a burden on the husband.

It is extremely shameless to become angry, swear, use vulgar language or abuse the husband for something that he does. If the husband, out of nobility or due to some other reason does not say anything, it does not mean that the wife must now fling verbal abuse at him and say whatever she likes. If she happens to do this, the position of the wife in the husband's eyes will most certainly fall and it could well lead to separation. Then there will not

be anyone to wipe off the wife's tears.

Love your husband and appreciate his companionship. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "There is nothing better than marriage between partners who love each other." The wife should be grateful to the husband. It is the husband who is her benefactor. A wife should feel happy by serving her husband even at the cost of her own comfort. She should try to win his heart and goodwill through serving him.

The wife must have a good relationship with the husband's parents, his brothers and sisters even if they cause distress to her. To complain all the time about her in-laws to the husband will decrease his love for her. It generally happens that when there are two or more women in the same house or several children, things go against one's temperament. There certainly will be conditions that do not conform to one's own habits. Accordingly, one should have good conduct with the in-laws. This will result in an increase of love and make life more pleasurable.

For more details regarding the rights of the spouses, refer to *'Bahishtî Zewar - Heavenly Ornaments'*.

THE PROCESS OF RECTIFICATION

During the process of rectification it should be borne in mind that anger should not be exercised on every trivial error by reprimanding and assaulting the wife. Such behavior is contrary to civility and dignity. Suspicion should not be aroused merely on the grounds of glancing or smiling at anyone.

If any misdeed is experienced which causes inconvenience to the husband, then he should resort to a mild form of correcting her by ignoring her for a few days or by frowning and expressing displeasure on his face. If she does not take heed, then he may sleep separately from her bed for a night or two. If there exists true concern and love for each other, this much reprisal is sufficient; there remains no need for harsh words and verbal abuse. If she insists on her misbehaviour, he is permitted to hit her slightly but he is not permitted to beat her savagely like a slave or a criminal would. It is reported in a Hadîth that it is indeed unbecoming that a man beats his wife like a slave during the day and cohabits with her during the night. It should be borne in mind that domestic upheaval or unconformity with her wishes naturally upsets a woman but this is an integral part of her psychological make-up and should not cause undue concern or irritation to the husband.

It is of important that the husband controls his emotions at the time of anger and does not lose his composure and sense of balance. Rasûlullâh ﷺ states: "The best of you is he who is amicable and tolerant to his family and I am the most amicable from among you all towards my family." A great deal of patience and tolerance should be exercised with regard to her misconduct. At the time of anger and wrath, it is best to leave her presence, recite *ta'awwuz* (أعوذ), drink some water and have a change of environment. It is no mean feat to defeat a wrestler in combat; perfection lies in controlling one's temper and tongue at the time of anger or else some undesirable word or sentence may be uttered (divorce for example) which brings long regret in its wake to all. To undertake

any decision or venture during a fit of rage is foolishness and cowardly. Once the temper has cooled and the mind settles into a state of equilibrium and after consultation with relatives and friends, a decision should be formulated.

The husband should not permit her to discard *hijâb* and should specifically prevent her from mixing with strangers or having any contact or communication with them.

The wife should always adorn and beautify herself for the husband whereby she will be preventing him from gazing at other strange women and she will prevent any feeling of contempt and disgust for her in this way. Even Sharî'ah has sanctioned this regulation for women especially on occasions when the husband returns from a lengthy journey; she should take pains to adorn herself.

When Rasûlullâh ﷺ and the Sahâbah Kirâm رضي الله عنهم used to return from a journey, they used to camp outside Madînah in order that the women prepare themselves for their husbands.

For the sake of the wife, the husband too should be extra conscious of his cleanliness and attraction in order that she may remain inclined towards him.

If the wife has an over inclination and flair for expensive garments and jewellery, then with great tact and wisdom he should narrate to her the anecdotes of the saintly personalities and their despising the riches of the world. Explain to her the temporary nature of this world and the

importance of preparation for the Âkhirah. She will then realize the futility of collecting and desiring the things of the world and her inclination for these things will decrease. If this measure is not resorted to, her lust and greed for riches will increase and eventually destroy her marriage and the entire home.

If he notices any extra piece of jewellery in her possession or clothing, he should undertake an immediate investigation into the matter and question her with regard to the source, etc.

People highly occupied and involved in their activities should spare some time to converse and jest with their wives.

If the wife is efficient and obedient, pious and good-natured, he should praise her occasionally in order to please her and encourage her to continue with her pleasant ways.

He should attempt to understand her hints and indications through her facial expressions as she may conceal many of her desires and convey them in the form of physical gestures.

He should never chide and reprimand her in front of her children as this destroys the harmony of the home and induces a spirit of disrespect for the mother in the children's eyes.

He should learn to live with the family in a loving and caring manner and not be like a man-eating beast or tyrant ruler.

Never praise a strange woman, especially her physical beauty and features before the wife as this will shatter her heart and spirit and suspicion of the husband's honesty will be created in her heart.

Consider seriously her opinions with regard to domestic matters; very often her views are more beneficial in these matters.

If the wife is literate, she should be encouraged to study Islamic literature. Never permit her to read novels, comics and other harmful literature.

Settle all domestic upheavals and disputes internally. Never publicize such incidents.

Never let the wife mingle with and befriend corrupt women as she will be influenced by their company and thus be destroyed.

If any conflict arises between the wife and the mother-in-law or sister-in-law, settle the dispute with great tact and diplomacy, being as just as possible to both parties.

In household matters, do not be very lenient or relenting, nor too harsh and severe.

If destiny has willed that an ill-tempered and ill-mannered wife be your spouse, whose rectification is practically impossible, such a circumstance permits the separating of such a woman if there is a dire need and if the welfare of both lies in this alone.

It should be remembered that the woman has been

created from the left rib and attempts to straighten her will only destroy her. Therefore the husband should be very tolerant and tactful.

Every attempt should be expended to save the marriage and to avoid a divorce. Undoubtedly Sharî'ah has strongly disapproved divorce and has termed it as the most contemptible of all permissible acts. Such a drastic measure should be resorted to only after great consideration and judgment, after mutual consultation with responsible and trustworthy associates and colleagues.

Under certain circumstances divorce is permissible; then too, only one or two divorces should be issued and not three simultaneously as this may cause much regret later on.

If the wife falls ill or her menstrual cycle is upset, immediate medical attention and advice should be sought and arranged.

THE INTIAL STAGES OF PREGNANCY AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

After some time has elapsed, the couple desire that Allâh ﷻ bless them with a child and thus Allâh ﷻ grants them their wish. However, it may so happen that Allâh ﷻ, through His infinite wisdom and power, despite them adopting the means, withholds from them a child for some time or forever.

They should never despair or become despondent. The

husband should not despise his wife for this but, considering it a decision of Allâh ﷻ, they should resolve to Du'â and plead to Allâh ﷻ. If necessary, they can resort to medical treatment as there exists the possibility of any one of the partners having some defect or weakness which prevents the pregnancy. There could be some expediency in the delay of the child being born. This is only in Allâh's knowledge.

After a considerable period has elapsed and some defect which prevents conception is medically detected in the woman, the husband may then contract a second marriage which he is entitled to by the decree of the Sharî'ah. However, the husband will have to exercise strict justice. Even if a little injustice and partiality is shown, the consequences will be severe indeed. It is reported in the Hadith: "The person who has two (or more) wives and he grants unfair preference to one of them, will arrive on the day of Qiyâmah with one half of his body drooping." It will then become apparent to one and all that this person was a transgressor and that he had not dealt justly with all his wives. It is of vital importance then, that this be borne in mind at all times.

When Allâh ﷻ resolves to grant a child, the first stage that follows is that of pregnancy. The pregnancy may be recognized by a variety of symptoms, the most prominent of which is the termination of menstruation. Other symptoms are feelings of nausea, vomiting, etc.

At this stage great care and precaution should be adopted to protect the wife's health and under the counsel of a qualified practitioner, nutritious and enriching foods and

tonics should be consumed. During this period, nausea, vomiting and discomposure is experienced. This induces a desire for sour and salty foods. Some women have a sudden craze for black soil. Caution should be taken that no such foods are consumed which are detrimental to the health; extremely bitter and spicy foods should be avoided. She should be prevented from jumping, hopping, running, any form of physical strain and lifting heavy objects as this may cause excessive bleeding or even a miscarriage.
During pregnancy, a woman should always remain calm and happy and should not be over concerned and overtaken by grief.

Together with the cleanliness of the clothes and the body, the heart and mind should also be purified and kept clear of evil thoughts, the effect of which will naturally manifest on the developing foetus.

A great deal of pain and inconvenience is experienced during the period of pregnancy. Since pregnancy lasts for a considerable span of time (9 months) and the severest pain and difficulty is experienced during childbirth, the Qur'ân, in making reference to the rights of the mother, emphasizes this fact in the following verses:

"And We have enjoined upon man to be good to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. (31:14)

"And We have commanded unto man kindness toward parents. His mother bore him with pain and brought him forth with pain..." (46:15)

All this difficulty she undergoes to bring into existence a Mu'min – a believing servant of Allâh ﷻ – who will be a means of increasing the Ummah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ and also a soldier of Islam. The Hadith thus declares for her a befitting reward in return for her suffering. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "From the period of pregnancy to the period of weaning, a woman receives the reward of a soldier who guards the borders of an Islamic state." Such a soldier is rewarded tremendously. The Hadith also states that: "The woman who dies of labour pains is regarded as a martyr (*shahîd*)." A woman should therefore gladly bear these difficulties patiently and calmly as she is highly rewarded for them.

During pregnancy, the husband must show great self-control, care and gentleness in their sexual union, for the sake of both mother and the child. He should be more considerate than before, because a woman goes through a nervous strain during her childbearing period. After all, it is no small sacrifice and suffering on her part to bear the burden of the baby in her for nine long months. Sexual union should become less frequent in the beginning and even less as the time of birth draws nearer and should be given up completely after childbirth, until the mother regains her health and the flow of blood stops. The maximum period of *nifâs* is forty days. However, from the Shar'î point of view, intercourse is permissible during pregnancy.

BIRTH CONTROL

At times it is experienced that due to the desire for a large number of children, the first child has hardly been weaned or the woman is still recovering or she is still suckling and she conceives yet again. These conditions may sometimes prove harmful to the health of the couple. Sharî'ah has permitted certain ways in which one can space out the children.

To eliminate conception forever is Harâm and a great sin. Imâm Bukhârî (رحمه الله) narrates a Hadith that the Sahâbah ؓ asked Rasûlullâh ﷺ permission to castrate themselves and he forbade them from doing so.

The method of temporary birth control known as "*azl*" (coitus interruptus) i.e. separating from the wife at the time of ejaculation is permissible according to many jurists. If the situation warrants it, a person can use other methods of temporary birth control. However, one should avoid all ways that are harmful to the health.

But the way in which the family planning campaigns or population controls are being launched nowadays, on the grounds that if the population goes on increasing as it is, it will not be possible to feed the people or improve the standard of living, is wholly un-Islamic. The modern forms of family planning and birth control are chiefly due to illicit sexual relations and in the case of marriage, to get rid of parental responsibilities and obligations.

Allâh ﷻ decides whether a child is to be born or not.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Whatever Allâh has ordained must take place. Whosoever Allâh wills to be born, until the day of Qiyâmah, will be born and no person can avoid it." Allah's decision is final and man cannot intervene in this. Allâh gives the order for birth and no contraceptive can prevent it and this is proven by the numerous reports of birth control measures failing. What guarantee have we got that conception will not take place? Many cases are found where no birth control is practiced but conception does not take place.

Abortion is Harâm. However, if the life of the mother is threatened and this is substantiated by an expert Muslim doctor, Sharî'ah will allow the removal of the foetus.

DELIVERY

When the time of birth dawns, it is appropriate to call a midwife to the house and make arrangements for the birth at home. One can make consultations with a physician or doctor

Nowadays it has become the trend to send the wife to the hospital where she is inspected by non-Muslim doctors, especially males. This is highly undesirable. It is not appropriate to leave the pure and clean environment of the house for the un-Islamic environment of the hospitals and clinics. However, if there are complications in the pregnancy, or the woman is in a desperate situation, there is no harm in sending her to the hospital. One should try as far as possible to appoint a Muslim female doctor to diagnose the wife. If a Muslim female is not available, then a Muslim male doctor. Only in the absence of a

Muslim doctor, should one resort to non-Muslim doctors.

CHILDREN – A BLESSING FROM ALLÂH ﷻ

Children ought to be regarded as a blessing from Allâh. The arrival of the baby should be welcomed with prayers for his or her welfare. Allâh must be thanked for having blessed you with an opportunity to bring up one of His servants and that you will leave behind a successor in this world and the Hereafter.

PRAY FOR PIOUS CHILDREN

If you have no offspring, pray for pious children just as Nabî Zakariyyâ ﷺ prayed for noble offspring:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ

"O Allâh, give me from Your bounty pious offspring, undoubtedly You are the hearer of the supplication."

Do not consider the birth of a child as inauspicious. Do not feel unhappy on the birth of a child on account of straitened circumstances, ill-heath or other reasons, and do not consider the birth of a child as a sign of misfortune for you.

PRAYERS AT THE TIME OF CHILDBIRTH

For an easy childbirth, the following verses should be written on a piece of paper, wrapped in a cloth and tied around her left thigh. Inshâ -Allâh it will ease the birth.

اِذَا السَّمَاءُ انْشَقَّتْ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ وَاِذَا الأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيْهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ

The ta'wîz should be immediately opened after the child is born. (اعمال قرآنی)

AZÂN AND IQÂMAH

The newly born baby should first of all be given a bath and the Azân should be recited in the right ear and the Iqâmah in left the ear. When Hadrat Hasan ﷺ, the maternal grandson of Rasûlullâh ﷺ was born, Rasûlullâh ﷺ recited the Azân and Iqâmah in his ears.

TAHNÎK

Tahnîk means chewing a date or anything sweet and placing its paste on the palate of the baby's mouth by using the index finger of the right hand. After the Azân and Iqamah, a pious person should be asked to chew a date and the paste of the fruit applied to the palate of the new born baby. The pious person should pray for the welfare of the child. Hadrat Asmâ narrates: "When Hadrat Abdullâh Ibn Zubair ﷺ was born, I placed him in the lap of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. He sent for a date, chewed it and applied the saliva to the mouth of Hadrat Abdullah Bin Zubair, and prayed for the well-being of the child." According to Hadrat Âishah ﷺ, Rasûlullâh ﷺ performed Tahnîk upon the children brought to him and prayed for

them. If dates are not available, honey or anything sweet may be applied.

NAMING THE BABY

Name the child with a decent and appropriate name, like that of the prophets or Allah's names with the prefix of Abd e.g. Abdur-Rahmân, Abdullâh, Yûsuf, Ibrâhîm or the names of the Sahâbah ﷺ. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "On the day of reckoning, you will be called by your names; therefore have good names."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ further said: "Of your names, Allâh likes Abdullâh and Abdur Rahmân the most and that the children should be named after the names of the Prophets."

CORRECTION OF NAMES

Names wrongly given should be changed into a good or auspicious one. Rasûlullâh ﷺ used to change bad names. One of the daughters of Hadrat Umar ﷺ was named Âsiyah (disobedient). Her name was changed to Jamîlah by Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Hadrat Zainab was the daughter of Hadrat Abu Salmah. Her name was Barrah, which means chaste. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ heard this name, he remarked: "You parade your piety yourself." When asked about another name for her, he suggested the name Zainab.

AQÎQAH

Aqîqah should be performed preferably on the seventh day after the birth. Aqîqah safeguards the child from illnesses and evil effects. The hair should be shaved and two goats or two sheep are to be sacrificed on behalf of a male and one goat or sheep on behalf of a female. Gold or silver equivalent to the weight of the hair should be distributed as charity. Rasûlullâh's ﷺ Sunnah is that Aqîqah should be performed on the seventh day, the name of the child is to be chosen on this very day, and the head should be shaven. The hair should be buried and not disposed off in the bin. If it is not done on the seventh day, it should be carried out on any subsequent seventh day.

The prayer to be offered at the time of Aqîqah is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ هٰذِهِ عَقِيْقَةُ.........تَقَبَّلْهُ كَمَا تَقَبَّلْتَهُ مِنْ حَبِيْبِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَّخَلِيْلِكَ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ
دَمُهَا بِدَمِهِ وَلَحْمُهَا بِلَحْمِهِ وَشَعْرُهَا بِشَعْرِهِ وَعَظْمُهَا بِعَظْمِهِ اَللّٰهُمَّ تَقَبَّلْهُ

"O Allâh! This is the Aqîqah of (the name of the child to be recited), accept this as You have accepted on behalf of Your loved one, Muhammad (ﷺ) and Your friend Ibrahim (عليه السلام). This offering of blood, is the ransom of the blood of the child, the flesh is the ransom for the flesh of the child, the hair is the ransom for the hair of the child; and these bones are the ransoms for the bones of the child. O Allâh accept it."

CIRCUMCISION OF THE MALE CHILD

Circumcision of boys is preferable on the seventh day. If on account of some circumstances this is not possible, then it should be done any time after that. However, one should try to have it done while the child is still young.

KALIMAH, THE FIRST UTTERANCE

When the child begins to speak, he should be taught to say the Kalimah Tayyibah, that is:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

There is no deity but Allâh and Muhammad ﷺ is the messenger of Allâh.

It has been narrated in a Hadith that when any member of the tribe of Banû Abdul Muttalib started talking, he used to teach him or her the second âyah of Sûrah Isrâ (chapter 17:111), wherein the basic Islamic principle of the Oneness of Allâh has been succinctly narrated. It is as follows:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ شَرِيْكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيْرًا

SUCKLING OF THE CHILD

The child has a right to be fed on the mother's milk. It is this bounty of the mother for which the Qur'ân reminds the child and exhorts him to treat his mother with exceptional love and kindness, in return for this service.

The mother's milk is the most suitable for the child. However, if due to some reason, the mother cannot breast-feed the child, he can be breast-fed by another woman. The breast-feeding woman should also keep her mind clear of all evil thoughts like the mother. The reason for this is that during the period of breast-feeding also, the nature and temperament of the woman has an effect on the child. If she can, she must use wholesome food so that the child can also become strong.

UPBRINGING OF THE CHILD

When the child begins to understand, he should be taught the basics of Dîn either at home or at the madrasah. No inappropriate act should be carried out in front of him. If he does anything wrong, he should be immediately corrected. Make all efforts to earn a halâl sustenance only. The parents should continuously make du'â for the good of the child. No stone should be left unturned in the correct upbringing of the child. The parents should not be negligent in this regard. The mother's lap is the first madrasah.

An easy way of educating the children nowadays is that instead of having the television and radio at home, one should teach the children Islamic books. Sometimes one can discuss masâil, sometimes the du'âs for the different occasions and sometimes one can make tilâwat (recitation) of the Qur'ân and tasbîh. The house can in fact become a madrasah and khânqâh. The members of the house will, if Allâh wills, come onto the right track.

The Holy Qur'ân says:

قُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

"O you who believe, protect yourself and your family members from the fire of hell."

Safety from the fire of hell lies only in knowing the basic principles of Islam, and living according to the commandments of Allâh and in obedience to Rasûlullâh ﷺ. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has said that the best legacy a father can leave for his offspring comprises of proper training and good education.

CHILDREN AND SALÂH

When children attain the age of seven years, they should be taught how to perform Salâh. For this purpose, they should be taken to the Masjid with the view to create a liking for Salâh. When they attain the age of ten, they should be forced to pray and even punished, if they neglect to do so. It should be impressed upon them that this negligence will not be tolerated.

SEGREGATION OF CHILDREN

When the children attain the age of ten, they should be made to sleep in separate beds. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has commented: "Ask your children to offer Salâh when they are seven years of age. Punish them for missing Salâh when they are ten and, allot separate beds for them at this age."

NEATNESS

Keep the children always neat and clean. Pay special attention towards their personal hygiene, cleanliness, bathing, ablution etc. They should wear neat and clean clothes, but should avoid pomposity and ostentatiousness. The dress for girls should be especially plain and unornamented. Expensive and gaudy clothes are likely to spoil the habits of the children.

CHILDREN TO BE ENCOURAGED

Never express disappointment on reforming and correcting your children, in front of them. On the contrary, applaud even minor good deeds done by them and be generous in appreciation of any virtue found in them. They should be encouraged so as to build self-confidence and courage, so that they may achieve a high place in their lives. Relate religious stories and anecdotes of pious persons. You must tell your children stories of prophets and pious persons and the heroic deeds and sacrifices of the venerable Sahâbah ﷺ. This is essential for their education and training, character building and inculcating a love for Islam. This has to be done at all costs. Occasionally recite the Holy Qurân rhythmically before them and relate incidents, anecdotes, teachings and traditions from the life of Rasûlullâh ﷺ. This would instill an intense love for Rasûlullâh ﷺ in them.

Cultivate the habit of respecting others' rights. On some occasion distribute some food, money etc to the poor through the children so that they may cultivate the habit

of charity and sympathy for the poor.

Similarly, occasions should also be furnished to the children, for distributing eatables among themselves doing justice to one another by recognizing one another's rights and for developing mutual co-operation.

Do not concede to each and every demand of the children. Tactfully try to dissuade them from this practice. If necessary, use force in this regard and see that they do not become obstinate and self-willed by unnecessary cajoling.

Do not shout at your children, nor talk to them harshly. Likewise, tell them not to talk in this vain manner among themselves. They should learn to talk in a sweet and mild tone.

Train your children to do their work themselves. They should not rely on the servants to do their small chores. Dependence upon servants is likely to make them lazy and inactive. Make them hardworking, laborious and accustomed even to taking up the most difficult jobs.

IMPARTIALITY

If there is a fight amongst children, you should not take sides with your children unfairly. You should find out whether your children are to be blamed; if so, then taking into consideration future mishaps, you should try to take appropriate measures to correct them.

You should treat all your children equally and avoid

injustice. However, if due to some natural causes, you feel more inclined towards a particular child, it is permissible. But in matters of treatment, bestowal of gifts and social matters, strict equality and fair play should be maintained. Never be partial to a particular child, as this may be noted and felt by the other children. This may develop a rebellious attitude in your children and sentiments constitute a great hindrance to the growth of the natural capabilities of the children and act as a deadly poison to the evolution of spiritual and ethical progress.

Once Hadrat Bashîr ﷺ, the father of Hadrat Nu'mân ﷺ, presented himself along with Hadrat Nu'mân before Rasûlullâh ﷺ, and said: "O Rasûl of Allâh, I have a slave whom I have gifted to this son." Rasûlullâh ﷺ asked: "Have you gifted to each of your sons a slave?" "No, O messenger of Allâh," said Bashîr ﷺ. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Then take back the slave, fear Allâh and treat your sons equally." Bashîr ﷺ, on his return took back the slave. According to another version, Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Do not make me a witness to a sin. I shall not be a witness to an injustice." Still another version has it that Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Do you desire that all your children should treat you well?" Hadrat Bashir said: "Why not? O Rasûl of Allâh." Rasûlullâh ﷺ then said: "Then do not do such a thing."

DAUGHTERS

It often happens that parents express extreme joy on the birth of a son but feel disheartened on the birth of a girl.

Girls are not to be regarded inferior to sons, nor should the sons be given preference over them in any matter. Both sons and daughters should be loved and treated equally. Always remember that children are a favour from Allâh. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "If any man has a daughter born to him and he does not bury her alive (as the pagan Arabs did) and he has neither treated her with contempt nor preferred his son over her, he would be granted entry into Jannah by Allâh."

Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, "Whoever maintains two girls until they attain maturity, he and I will come on the day of judgement like this," and he joined his two fingers.

Be very careful and pleased to give the fixed share of the girl from your property. This is the share which has been prescribed by Allâh, and no one has the right to increase or decrease her share. It is not befitting for a devoted Muslim to deprive the daughter of her share due to some excuse, or to give her less than her due, according to his own calculations.

CHILDREN - A MEANS OF TRIAL

Parents should follow these practical guidelines and make Du'â for their children from the depth of their heart. The most merciful Allâh will certainly grant these heart-touching supplications of the parents.

Rasûlullâh ﷺ emphasized that one should keep one's love and affection for children within normal and reasonable limits and should not let it become a

hindrance in the way of Allah's Dîn. Children along with wealth are a means of a test. The Qur'ân mentions this concept in these words: "O believer, do not betray Allâh and His Messenger, nor violate your trusts knowingly and know that your worldly goods and children are a test for you, and Allâh has plenty for giving you as a reward." Again in Sûrah Taghâbun, we read these words; "Your riches and your children may be but a trial." These verses remind parents of the dangers involved in excessive love and attachment to their children to the extent that they sometimes find it difficult to maintain the standard of morality, goodness and justice demanded by their faith. It is therefore necessary for them to draw a line between the love of their children and love for Allâh.

CHILDREN AND THE DÎN OF ALLÂH

Parents must, under all circumstances, tread upon the path of Allâh and never leave it for the sake of their children nor for anybody else. If they do, they will be losers and no one can help them in their misery and ruin. The Qur'ân gives this warning in these words: "O you who believe! Let not your wealth and your children divert you from the remembrance of Allâh. If anyone does this, the loss is their own." Remembrance of Allâh includes every act of service and goodness, every kind thought and kind deed, for this is the service in sacrifice, which Allâh requires from us.

The wife and the children can become an obstruction in the way of Allâh. In some cases their demands may conflict with a man's moral and spiritual convictions and duties. In such cases he must guard against the

abandonment of his convictions, duties and ideals to their requests and desires. But he must not treat them harshly. He must make reasonable provisions for them, and if they persist in opposing his clear duties and convictions, he must forgive them and not expose them to shame and ridicule, while at the same time holding on to his clear duties.

CHILDREN'S DUTIES TO PARENTS

Duty towards parents is next to the duty to Allâh. From this it can be well imagined what a tremendous stress Islam has laid on obedience to parents. The parents went through great difficulties in bringing up the child. The mother especially had to endure great pain and weakness in bearing the child. Her rights are therefore much more. It is therefore very important for the children to obey the parents. Disobedience to parents is regarded as a major sin. The most unfortunate man is he (according to Rasûlullâh ﷺ) who does not enter Jannat though he has old parents at home. According to one hadîth, after *kufr* and *shirk*, disobedience to parents is the most serious sin.

In obeying parents, some tangible benefits are derived in this world. Life may be prolonged as Rasûlullâh ﷺ has said: "Nothing but obedience to parents may prolong life." Rasûlullâh ﷺ said: "Verily He (Allâh) hastens punishment during his lifetime before death for the one who disobeys his parents." Death is made easy for one who obeys his parents. Rasûlullâh ﷺ said, "Whoever has three things in him, Allâh will make his death easy and will enter him into Jannat: mercy to the weak, kindness

to parents and good treatment to slaves.

PATIENCE ON THE LOSS OF A CHILD

Sometimes Allâh ﷻ grants the couple a child and then takes the child away. This is undoubtedly an extremely grievous situation. However, one has to exercise extreme patience. It is natural for the eyes to tear and to bear the grief in the heart, but one should not utter any inappropriate statement with the tongue. The heart should also be pure of any unsuitable thoughts. One should keep the reward of the hereafter in mind. Rasûlullâh ﷺ has promised Jannah for the woman who is patient on the loss of three children, two children and even one child. Accordingly, one should not lose one's patience and forego the reward of Jannah. Be patient and take full advantage of the glad tidings given by Rasûlullâh ﷺ.

والحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله

